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PASTORAL LETTER

OF
HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP OF LONDON,
TO THE
CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE DIOCESE.

JOHN, by the Grace of God and the appointment of the Holy See, Bishop of London, to the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese:

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:

The time is come for taking up, in the various missions of the diocese, the annual collection for the purpose of ecclesiastical education. I need hardly urge the Rev. Clergy to impress upon their people the duty of contributing generously towards this praiseworthy and holy object. The faithful cannot contribute their means towards a more necessary, and at the same time a more meritorious work.

Without a sufficient number of priests religion would decay and perish, and immortal souls would starve for want of the bread of life. Now, we cannot have a sufficient number of priests in this country without the means of educating them, and these means must come from the generous offerings of our ever faithful people. It takes about eight years to educate a young man in College and Seminary, before he is qualified by science and ecclesiastical training, for the efficient discharge of the high and holy duties of the Sacred Ministry. This one fact serves to show that a very large expenditure of money must necessarily be incurred in the education of young men for the holy ministry in this diocese.

All who have at heart the good of our holy religion; all who desire the solid establishment of the holy Church of God in this free and happy country; all who value the salvation of immortal

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souls purchased by the precious blood of our Redeemer, will not hesitate to give largely of their worldly means to enable the Bishop to educate a holy and efficient priesthood for this large and growing diocese.

Local improvements, such as the building of churches, presbyteries, &c., are no reasons why the priest and people of each mission should not do their utmost to promote this sacred cause, and to do their duty by the Bishop and the diocesan institutions.

Our Fathers in the faith in Europe felt the pressure on their consciences of the great duty of helping to educate the priesthood; and hence they founded and endowed great and renowned Seminaries, in which young aspirants to the holy ministry have been trained in learning and piety. Our Irish forefathers, even in the midst of the persecutions of the penal times, out of the scanty means spared them by wholesale confiscations, founded and endowed on the continent of Europe renowned Seminaries, which are still flourishing, and which for several centuries failed not to send forth holy missionaries of the cross to preach the Gospel of Christ to their persecuted countrymen at home, to administer to them the consolations of our holy religion, and to keep the sacred fire of Catholic faith burning through long ages of darkness and storm, until the advent of these better and more peaceful times, when the light of our holy faith has expanded into the calm splendors of a perfect day.

Now what is the secret of this strong innate desire of a Catholic people to help in the creation of a Catholic priesthood. This desire springs from a principle of Catholic faith. The priest is the representative of Jesus Christ on earth. "He that heareth you heareth me." Luke, x. c., 16 v. He is the official public teacher of Christ's saving truths. "Go teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Mathew, xxviii. c., 19-20 v. He is the ambassador of Christ and the dispenser of His mysteries; he is the guardian of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. In his consecrated hands, as he stands at the altar and repeats the words of consecration, the Son of God becomes, as it were, incarnate, and offers Himself as a victim of propitiation to His eternal Father for the sins of men, and applies to immortal souls the saving merits of the bloody sacrifice of Calvary. The min-

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istry of the Catholic priest is linked with the dearest associations of Catholic life. The priest baptizes the new born infant, and thus makes it a child of God, and an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven; he unfolds to the young mind the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, and teaches it those great truths that flame out like beacons of salvation on the darksome journey of life; he causes the child to be enrolled, through confirmation, amongst the soldiers of Jesus Christ, and thus equips him for warfare against the enemies of salvation. When the sinner comes heavy-laden with the burden of guilt and of sorrow, which is ever its companion, the priest of God receives him like the Father of the Prodigal, forgives him his sins through the Sacrament of Penance, and through this wondrous mystery of reconciliation, restores him to the friendship of his heavenly Father and to the peace and protection and privileges of his Father's house. But the priest not only takes up this poor wounded traveller of life, whom he finds robbed and wounded by the wayside of sin and error; he cares tenderly for him; he pours the oil and wine of Christ's healing merits into his wounded soul; he feeds him with the bread of life—the body and blood of Christ—and thus enables him to reach the land of promise—the kingdom of God's eternal happiness. The priest comforts and relieves the poor; he consoles the afflicted and sorrow-stricken; he brings the peace of Christ into families torn by dissensions; he reconciles neighbors who had become estranged; he admonishes and reproves the erring; he encourages the wavering; and by word and example he points out to all his flock the road that leads to Heaven and to happiness. And when sickness enters the homestead, and when medical aid is impotent to stay the ravages of disease, and to assuage the pains of illness, the priest, the physician of the soul, comes and ministers to the mind diseased, heals the infirmities of the soul, consoles and fortifies the dying Christian with the Sacraments of Christ, reconciles him to death as coming from the will of God, and thus by his Christian ministrations makes death a sacred and holy thing, and the gate that opens into a happy eternity. When the poor body, cold and lifeless, is borne to the Church, amid the tears of friends and the sympathetic regrets of neighbors, the priest is there to offer up the holy sacrifice for the soul that is gone, to beseech for it

eternal rest and light perpetual, and by holy prayers and solemn benedictions to commit the mortal remains to the guardianship of the consecrated grave. Thus, from the cradle to the grave, in our joys and sorrows, in the epochs that mark the pathway of our existence, with the dearest associations and the deepest interests of our lives, the ministry of the Catholic priest is most intimately connected and intertwined. O what an unspeakable treasure then is the good and holy priest! What a happiness to the Church! What a priceless blessing to the parish or remote mission in which he ministers! Such a priest is one of the greatest gifts that God can bestow on a Christian people. During life his ministry is fruitful in untold blessings, and even after death, his memory, his words, his example, his works remain to console, to bless, to fortify and to sanctify innumerable souls.

O, Supreme Pastor, the author and finisher of our faith, have pity on Thy people and send forth priests according to Thy Divine heart into Thy vineyard. This country is already white with an abundant harvest of precious souls; deign in Thine infinite mercy to send forth worthy and numerous workmen into this rich harvest; inspire Catholic mothers with the holy resolution of rearing sons for the service of Thy holy altar, and the ministry of salvation; speak to the hearts of generous youths, and call them to the ranks of Thy Priesthood, and finally put it into the hearts of our faithful people to be noble and generous in their contributions, so as to help in the holy work of educating the Priesthood. St. Dionysius justly remarks, that it is the most divine of all divine works, to co-operate with God in the salvation of souls; and our people thus co-operate when they dedicate their sons to God, in the holy office of the Priesthood; or when, by their generous offerings, they contribute to the advancement of ecclesiastical education.

There are some parents in this country who will make any sacrifices to enable their sons to study law or medicine, or to enter into commercial business; but who will do little or nothing for the sons who may be willing to study for the holy Priesthood. The faith and charity of such parents must be very weak and cold. In the ages of faith, and still, in many European countries, Catholic mothers would prefer seeing their sons ministering at God's altar than in the highest positions of worldly

honor. Can it be said that it is the dearest wish of the mother's heart, in this country, to see her son a priest? It is a very bad sign of the spiritual life of a people when they do not supply a Priesthood drawn from their own sons. The best and most faithful seed must decay and die if it gets little or no nourishment from the soil into which it is cast.

It can truly be affirmed that the Church will never be firmly established in this country until it possesses a native Priesthood—until it is interlaced with the feelings, affections, and natural habits of the people—until, in fine, it is made "racy of the soil," like some giant oak that has grown gradually up in our forests, spreading its roots abroad, and driving them deep into the soil and deriving therefrom its sap and nourishment, until it has acquired the sturdy strength and magnificent proportions and fadeless durability that bid defiance to the fiercest storms.

We, therefore, most earnestly entreat Christian parents to encourage those of their children whom God may call to the high and holy life of the Priesthood, and to help them according to their means, to reach that cherished object of their hearts.

We exhort the pastors of souls to have special care of the young boys who, in their opinion, give signs of a divine vocation to the Holy Ministry; to encourage and befriend them and lead them on to piety and the love of God.

Finally, we call on pastors and people to co-operate in making the annual collection for ecclesiastical education a generous one. Each family in the Diocese ought to contribute, at least, *fifty cents* annually for this purpose. This sum is, in itself, insignificant, and would not be oppressive to the poorest families, but yet, in the aggregate, it would create a fund which would enable the Bishop, not only to educate theological students, but also to encourage and help deserving students who are not so far advanced, and who have little or no means of prosecuting their studies; and there are many such in the Diocese.

We confidently count upon priests and people to co-operate loyally and heartily with us in this important matter, and thus enable us to discharge efficiently one of the weightiest and most essential duties of our episcopal office.

We append a list of the receipts received last year from each mission, for the ecclesiastical education fund; we also subjoin an account of the expenditure. It will be seen that the expenditure even for theological students is in excess of the receipts. It will also be seen that many missions are sadly remiss in their duty in this matter.

To show how differently Catholics act elsewhere, it will suffice to state that, in the neighboring Diocese of Detroit, the sum of eight thousand dollars, we have learned, was raised last year for the purpose of Ecclesiastical Education.

We trust, therefore, that in a matter of such extreme importance our Catholic people will henceforth do their duty, and thus bring upon themselves and families the abundant blessings of God.

This Pastoral shall be read in all our churches on the first Sunday after its reception, or as soon afterwards as possible.

We wish the clergy to preserve this Pastoral, with the view of reading it each year on the occasion of the collection for Ecclesiastical Education.

May the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Given under our Hand and Seal, at St. Peter's Palace, London, on this the 10th of July, A. D. 1880.

† JOHN WALSH,

Bishop of London.

By order of His Lordship,

MICHAEL J. TIERNAN,

Secretary ad hoc.

P. S.—The Rev. Clergy are hereby notified that the Ecclesiastical retreat, which they are required to attend, will begin this year at Mount Hope, on Monday, the 6th of September next.

† JOHN,

Bishop of London.

ECCLESIASTICAL EDUCATION FUND.

STATEMENT ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1879.

Receipts from Different Parishes.			Expenses.	
1879.			1879.	
Amherstburgh,	....\$		Feb. 11, To Seminarians..	\$20 00
Ashfield,	Sep. 18....	20 00	" 28, " " ..	30 00
Belle River,	"	8 50	Apl. 17, " " ..	18 00
Biddulph,	Sep. 15....	50 00	Sep. 10, " " ..	45 00
Bothwell,	....		Nov. 4, " Seminary bill,	889 18
Chatham,	June 6....	120 00	" 4, " Carlow College	102 78
Corunna,	Sep. 17....	34 00	" 4, " Mt. Mellary ..	48 94
Kincora,	" 18....	64 00	June 24, " St. Michael's	
Goderich,	" 15....	40 58	College.....	<u>262 08</u>
Irishtown, Aug. & "	18....	112 50		
Ingersoll,	....		
Maidstone,	" 16....	40 00		
Mount Carmel,	" "	70 00		
Paincourt,	" 15....	24 00		
Sandwich,	....	25 38		
Sarnia,	" 16....	41 00		
St. Anns,	Jan. 23....	20 00		
St. Francis,	Sep. 16....	27 60		
St. Joseph,	" 18....	7 65		
St. Marys,	July 22....	67 50		
St. Thomas,	Sep. 16....	35 00		
Stoney Point,	" 17....	10 00		
Stratford,	July 17....	100 00		
Strathroy,	Sep. 17....	20 00		
Windham,	July 15....			
Windsor,	" 17....	50 00		
Woodstock,	Sep. 18....	25 00		
Wyoming,	" 16....	38 00		
Park Hill,	" 17....	30 00		
Woodslee,	July 4....	24 45		
Fh. Settlement,	....		
Wallaceburgh,	Sep. 18....	25 00	Total amount expended..	\$1,405 98
London,	....	168 75	" " received....	<u>1,298 91</u>
		<u>\$1,298 91</u>	To bal. due to Bishop....	\$117 07